

United States  
Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Eugene District Office

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Rat Creek Bridge Repair

Background: The Rat Creek Bridge is a converted railroad trestle, now used for recreational non-motorized use on the Row River Trail (rails-to-trail project). In early May of 2001, an illegal warming fire destroyed a couple of pilings and several bracing timbers on the bridge. An initial (BLM) post-fire inspection of the bridge noted rot in several bridge timbers as well – most readily apparent where past repairs had used untreated timbers in direct contact with the ground. Subsequent to this, an engineering firm was contracted to conduct a complete structural investigation of the bridge and to recommend measures needed to rehabilitate it. The contract engineers were also asked to identify any structural changes needed, if any, to accommodate agency vehicles and maintenance equipment – previously, the bridge capacity had been evaluated for recreational use only (i.e. no vehicles). The structural investigation was conducted in mid-October 2001 (after fall draw down of the reservoir), while recommendations for specific repairs followed in December. The structural investigation found minor to substantial rot, insect damage, and/or fire damage in 10 (71%) of 14 untreated support pilings, while rot and other damage was noted in 2 (8%) of the 26 treated pilings. Previous construction or repairs either used concrete footings under the pilings, or the pilings were driven directly into the ground. Seven (70%) of the 10 pilings driven into the ground have damage, while damage (mostly minor) was noted in 5 (17%) of the 30 pilings resting on concrete footings. Basically, the engineering recommendations call for the use of concrete footings for bents #1 and 5 (thus placing all of the bridge's abutments and bents on concrete foundations) and the replacement of all damaged timbers (using treated timbers). No changes in bridge design were needed to allow for agency vehicles and maintenance equipment – there is adequate capacity with the existing design, after repairs. This document looks at the environmental consequences of the recommended repair measures.

(After the fire, the bridge was closed to all use. A previous, more limited, structural investigation and repair recommendations (May 22, 2001; by the same contract firm) identified interim measures to stabilize the bridge until permanent repairs could be made. Replacement of the fire-damaged cross braces, along with a stepped-up frequency of inspections, were identified as interim measures (adequate to accommodate recreational use, contingent on satisfactory inspection evaluation) until the bridge could be fully repaired (see 1791A-CE-01-43). The fire-damaged braces were replaced in mid-September, and an initial inspection was conducted, after which the bridge was reopened for recreational use.)

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to construct footings for bents # 1 and 5, and to replace all fire-damaged, insect-damaged, and rotted timbers (piles, braces, sills, and caps). The proposed work is described in detail in the documents *Rat Creek Bridge Structural Investigation and Repair* and *Rat Creek Bridge Specifications* (January 25, 2002). These repairs will be made when Dorena Reservoir is drawn down – typically in the period of late September through April. This timing will allow for the work to occur above the active stream channel.

Decision: The proposed action described above is approved to be carried out during calendar years 2002-3.

Rationale: The Proposed Action is consistent with the *Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (April

1994), the Eugene District ROD/RMP (June 1995), and the *Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) for the Row River Special Recreation Management Area* (November 1995). The RAMP specifically identifies bridge maintenance as one of several ongoing tasks needed to manage the Row River Trail. The Proposed Action will not prevent attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives. Construction of the footings, and the replacement of damaged and weathered bridge timbers, are maintenance actions that can be readily conducted with the water drawn down in Dorena Reservoir. A similar action (construction of a concrete footing on a corresponding bent (#2 west side middle pier) was conducted by the BLM in 1996 without significant environmental consequences. Mitigation measures identified in subsequent in-water and removal/ fill permits will be incorporated into the repair work. The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as described in the Departmental Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 (1.7); "routine and continuing government business, including ... operations, maintenance and replacement activities having limited context and intensity") and does not meet any of the exception criteria.

Prepared by: /s/ Bryant Smith  
Recreation Planner

Date: 2/19/02

Reviewed by: /s/ Rick Colvin  
Landscape Planner

Date: 2/19/02

Approved by: /s/ Steven Calish  
Field Manager

Date: 7/3/02

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
EUGENE DISTRICT

1791A-CE-02-13  
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CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW  
**Exception Criteria Review Checklist**

Proposed Action: Construct new footings for bents #1 and 5, and replace all fire-damaged, insect-damaged, and rotted timbers (piles, braces, sills, and caps). This work will be conducted when Dorena Reservoir is drawn down.

Review the proposed action against each of the 10 criteria listed below. If the project meets one or more of the criteria, it is an exception from categorical exclusion and MUST be analyzed in an EA or EIS. To qualify as a Categorical Exclusion the proposed action may not meet any of the criteria. If the criterion does not apply, indicate "Not Applicable." Any mitigation measures (such as contract stipulations or terms and conditions on permits) necessary to ensure that the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion should be identified at the bottom of the page.

Exception Criteria		Comments
1.	Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety	Issue a closure order for period of reconstruction, Notify local press of project work & closure order
2.	Have adverse effects on unique resources (i.e., parks, recreation, refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, wetlands, flood plains, etc.)	
3.	Have highly controversial environmental effects	
4.	Have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks	
5.	Establish a precedent that could result in significant impacts	
6.	Be directly related to other actions having cumulatively significant effects	
7.	Have adverse effects on cultural or historical resources	
8.	Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed as threatened or endangered or have adverse effect on designated critical habitat for these species.	
9.	Require compliance with E.O. 11988 (flood plain management), E.O. 11990 (protection of wetlands), or the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act	
10.	Threaten to violate Federal, State, Local or Native American law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment	Will obtain DSL, ODFW, and ACOE permits for in-water work and removal/ fill activities
Mitigation measures needed to qualify as CE: Any requirements/ mitigation measures identified in DSL, ODFW, and/or ACOE permits will be incorporated into project implementation.		

Reviewed By: /s/ Rick Colvin

Date: 2/19/02

Above mitigation measures have been adopted and will be implemented.

Field Manager: /s/ Steven Calish

Date: 2/20/02

OR 090-1791-5  
(June 1993)

